



KentuckyHistoricalSociety

TORN WITHIN & THREATENED WITHOUT

KENTUCKIANS IN THE CIVIL WAR ERA



4th/5th Grade Pre-Visit Activity

Understanding Primary and Secondary Sources

Overview:

This pre-visit activity is designed to teach students how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. As a class, students will review primary and secondary source definitions, explore examples, and employ critical thinking skills to determine whether specific sources are primary or secondary. All HistoryMobile activities support Common Core English Language Arts standards. Pre-visit activities are designed to complement a larger project-based student experience that includes a visit from the HistoryMobile and post-visit activities.

About the Exhibit: The HistoryMobile exhibit “Torn Within and Threatened Without: Kentuckians and the Civil War Era” features eight Kentuckians ranging from the famous to the everyday citizen. Through personal recollections, primary sources, authentic artifacts and touch-screen activities, students can explore the difficult decisions Kentuckians faced during the Civil War.

Time Required:

30-45 minutes

Essential Resources:

- Online Access to primary and secondary source materials:
 - <http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/MS/id/152/rec/14>
 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Clay
 - <http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/PH/id/2656/rec/4>
 - <http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/Morgan/id/3545/rec/13>

Vocabulary:

- Primary source: *an artifact, document, or other source of information that was created at the time under study.*
- Secondary Source: *an account or interpretation of an event by someone who wasn't actually there.*

Activity:

1. Explain to students the difference between primary and secondary sources.

- a. A **primary source** is an artifact, document, or other source of information that was created at the time under study. Primary sources represent real pieces of history such as inventions, letters, diaries, or photographs.

- i. Example of a primary source:

<http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/singleitem/collection/GRP/id/1667/rec/3>

❖ **Questions:**

- a. Is this a real photograph from history?
- b. What is being shown in the photograph?

- b. A **secondary source** is an opinion, account, or interpretation of a past event by someone who wasn't actually there. Examples of secondary sources include encyclopedia entries, movies about historical events, and textbooks.

- i. Example of a secondary source:

<http://freedomofink.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/abraham-lincoln.jpg>

❖ **Questions:**

- a. Who is the person in this image?
- b. Is it a photograph or a piece of art?
- c. Lincoln died more than 140 years ago. Do you think the artist ever met Abraham Lincoln?
- d. Does the image look like it's from Lincoln's time

2. One at a time, display each of the following images and ask students to raise their hand and identify and explain whether it is a primary or secondary. Allow other students to make comments and ask questions. (Correct answers are below)

- a. <http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/MS/id/152/rec/14>

- i. Description: This letter was written by a man named George during the Civil War. It is dated 1861.

❖ **Question:**

- a. Is this source primary or secondary? Why?

- b. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Clay

- i. Description: From the Wikipedia web site.

❖ **Question:**

- a. Is this primary or secondary? Why?

- c. <http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/PH/id/2656/rec/4>

- i. Description: This photograph was taken during the Civil War in 1862.

❖ **Question:**

- a. Is it primary or secondary? Why?

- d. <http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/Morgan/id/3545/rec/13>

- i. Description: This drawing from 1930 shows Abraham Lincoln's life journey from his birthplace to the White House.

❖ **Question:**

- a. Is this primary or secondary? Why?

Answers to 2: a-d:

- a. Primary
- b. Secondary
- c. Primary
- d. Secondary